

Program Meeting

Virtual Picnic via Zoom

August 7th 1:30 PM

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82118695964?pwd=dDVqOXFlbUJrakxLWXhLNTRQL1o vUT09>

July
August
2022



The Sandpiper



Watershed Hero - Prairie Restoration *adapted from LewisTalk.com*

Native Washingtonian Sabra Noyes, anticipating her retirement, in 2010 purchased 40 acres in Oakville near the Black and Chehalis Rivers. In 2021, the whole acreage is covered by a Conservation Easement with the Chehalis River Basin Land Trust. This means it will be protected in perpetuity as a wildlife sanctuary with restored prairie and savanna habitats.

Sabra has been actively restoring 20 acres. She also volunteers at Glacial Heritage Preserve, a restored prairie in Thurston County, where she learns about prairie habitat restoration.

In discussing her restoration efforts, “When I first bought this place, there was a fair amount of Scotch broom,” Sabra shared. “I was still working up in Kitsap County, so I would come down on the weekends, and for a year and a half, I worked to control invasive Scotch broom.”

“In some areas, I don’t mow the grass since the long grass is where you get your insects which feed the birds. There’s another section that I haven’t mowed because I have got Savannah sparrows,” said Sabra.

With a fall planting anticipated in the future, this pasture will be strictly for the pollinators. It attracts so many. There are gnats and flies — and the big bumblebee.”

Many new native birds have arrived on her land, as

Sabra has installed over 30 bird boxes to attract the western bluebird, though none have shown up, but are used by tree swallows, violet-green swallows, and the largest swallow — the purple martin.

“Oh, the martins, the purple martins!” said Sabra. “There were no purple martins when I first came here. Many of the trees they used to nest in have been lost. I put up the first bird box, and violet-green swallows came and nested in it right away — they just needed the habitat. The following year, I had one purple martin come. So, I put up more and painted them whitish to discourage non-native starling occupation. Now there are five pairs!”

Once plentiful in western Washington, Purple martins now have only 5,000 breeding birds in Western Washington.

Sabra’s restoration efforts have benefited from the Sustainability in Prisons Project. Prisoners grow threatened prairie plants and raise threatened prairie butterflies. Balsamroot is grown as it is likely dependent on pollinators for reproduction. Because of the loss of bumblebees and honeybees — coupled with the loss of prairie habitat — this plant is now diminished.

In the fall of 2019, Sabra got 196 of the balsamroot plants. “Last spring was the first year the cattle were used to graze down non-native grasses, so the plants were already growing,” said Sabra. “Balsamroots plants spend their first couple of years getting their roots down deep, so they must be nurtured. Once they’re established, they’re tremendously hearty,” said Sabra.

Native people and settlers used balsamroot for medicine and eating. Also recently planted by Sabra were several of the threatened golden paintbrush in her most undisturbed prairie habitat.

“I also have native Roemer’s fescue bunchgrass,” said Sabra. “Once common in oak savannas, it has been overtaken by invasive weeds and alarmingly diminished. Roemer’s fescue is a key native grass in the restoration of upland prairie and oak savanna habitat.”

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The President's Perch



By Janet Strong

Skagit Audubon and Willapa Hills Audubon have teamed up with The Carbon Capture Foundation (TCCF) to promote the planting of trees as one way to counteract the effects of climate change. This non-profit organization is offering free trees to members of Audubon chapters in our state who might have or know of a place to plant them, up to a maximum of 240 seedlings per household. The species offered are Douglas fir, Red alder, Western redcedar, and Black cottonwood, depending upon availability. Check out the TCCF website at thecarboncapturefoundation.org.

If you have the space, even a big backyard or a lot, or some suitable acreage, you might consider taking advantage of this offer. Seedling recipients agree to plant and nurture these babies so they grow to become successful carbon storage units for the future. They may need plant protectors to keep nibblers at bay and watering the first season of two. One limitation is that they cannot be used for commercial forestry, to be harvested in future years for a profit.

Orders by the chapter should be made in early August and the seedlings will be delivered in December through March, the time when they should be planted. TCCF has promised to include planting instructions. If you are interested or have questions, please contact Janet Strong and she will do her best to answer them. Be sure to consult TCCF's website. This project has exciting possibilities!

A true conservationist is one who plants trees under whose shade he/she may never sit!



photo Colorado State University

Membership Meeting *Zoom to our Annual Picnic*

After much discussion, the GHAS Board has decided not to hold an in-person picnic again this year. We had hoped to hold the picnic at Janet Strong's home in Malone and enjoy her woods and garden. However, Grays Harbor County has been put on a high level for Covid infections and we are concerned about our group gathering, knowing we have members who are high risk. Even though we would be outside most of the time and would require masks, there would be many occasions when we couldn't mask up.

Instead, we are proposing a Zoom Picnic on Sunday, August 7, from 1:30 to 3 PM,
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82118695964?pwd=dDVqOXFlbUJrakxLWXhLNTRQL1ovUT09>

We will all have our picnic lunch around our kitchen tables while we log into our GHAS Zoom link. Because it's been so long since we've seen each other, we'd love to hear from each person about what they've been up to – travels, bird watching, gardening, and any other activities we want to talk about. Will you join us?

We'll keep hope alive that soon we can go back to meeting in person at the Hoquiam Library meeting room for our programs and next year have our great picnic together in person! In the meantime, wear your masks, get your boosters, and keep birding.

Membership dues due

Your local Grays Harbor Audubon Society depends on the kindness of you, and a couple of strangers. January marks the date when memberships are due for renewal. If you have not already renewed, simply turn to page 8 of this Sandpiper and fill out your renewal at a level that is comfortable for you, or perhaps just make a donation.

We depend on your support to bring you the programs you enjoy at the bi-monthly get-togethers. Subscribing at a higher-level allows us to enhance the care and consideration we give to our over 3,000 acres of essential wetlands and habitat for birds and other wildlife species. Grays Harbor Audubon protects birds and the places they need, today and tomorrow, but only with your support. Make sure you renew or upgrade today. If you are unsure, contact Linda Orgel ldotorg@oleary-creek.com to review your current status.

Thank you in advance for caring about the birds, and your generous support of our Chapter.



Roemer's bunch grass. Photo Chehalis Basin Lead Entity

Roemer's fescue provides food or cover for various songbirds, small mammals, and beneficial insects and is a larval host to Mardon skipper, a rare PNW butterfly.

An invasive species that Sabra identified is the Tansy ragwort. "It will be coming out as it is so noxious to cattle and horses," she said. Tansy is very noxious as all parts are toxic to cattle and horses when they ingest it while grazing or in hay. As a class B weed, if you have this on your property, you are required to control it.

Within her acreage, Sabra has a grassy swale that channels water during intense flooding events. The swale slows and infiltrates the water, which recharges groundwater — eventually making its way into the Black River and then into the Chehalis River.

"On three acres, I'm working with the Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) to re-establish a Garry oak forest," shared Sabra.

The PNW's Garry oak ecosystems are among the most threatened ecosystems in North America. As Washington's only native oak species, Garry oaks are a protected species locally and statewide. Forestry experts estimate that Garry oak habitat is only five percent of what it was before settlers.

Garry oaks offer shade, beauty, and small flowers — blooming in late spring — and provide for pollinators like native bees; its leaf buds are host to the larvae of various butterflies.

Studies show that the genus "Quercus, to which Garry oaks belong," hosts more caterpillars and other insects than any other genus in the northern hemisphere. Birds feed their young, the highly nutritious larvae, adult insects, and spiders found on the oak — not seeds or fruit. Other studies show a higher diversity of bird species in oak forests than in nearby conifer forests.

For more information on planting native prairie species, check out *Prairie Landowner Guide* for

Western Washington.

"I learned so much about environmental stewardship from my father. He often planted daffodils in ditches," shared Sabra.

"Nearby the Black River is a one hundred-to-two-hundred-foot buffer consisting of Oregon ash, a few cottonwoods, Pacific ninebark — my personal favorite — and other native trees and shrubs growing here," said Sabra. "These plants feed wildlife. I have found bear scat and have heard several species of owls. In 2010, I even had a pair of Golden eagles here!"

Just "do it," says Sabra to landowners who want to begin their own restoration projects. "You can start small. It doesn't matter if it is a two-foot patch in your front yard — it matters."

"Connect to any group, and you'll get the support that you need," added Sabra. "Additional organizations/agencies that I have worked with are the Center for Natural Lands Management, EcoStudies Institute, Friends of Puget Prairies, USFWS, the Audubon Society, and more."

With her voice rich in emotion, Sabra reflected on why she works hard to restore the land. "Life is valuable. There needs to be safe places for the animals and plants."

"If I accomplish nothing more than to have 90 percent of native plants out there," she adds. "They are going to feed the insects, the microorganisms, and the birds. My desire is to do as much as possible while I'm living — so that this land will be viewed as an asset to perpetuate."

Editor's note: The original article can be found at <http://www.lewistalk.com/2022/05/11/watershed-hero-prairie-restoration-with-sabra-noyes/>



photo Mardon Skipper Butterfly Chehalis Lead Entity

Haikus and photos by David Linn



Variegated
Branch for a colorful perch
A little pewee



So lightly floating
Stretching for a fuchsia treat
In vibrant colors



Bringing in a stone
Submerging in bathwater
Cleaning ritual



Swainson's Hawky photo Marina Schultz

Audubon scientists develop new method to improve mapping of bird migrations *adapted from National Audubon*

More than forty scientists from the National Audubon Society and other leading bird and wildlife research and conservation groups published a new study modeling a novel approach to mapping seasonal migration pathways for birds. The study, published recently in *Ecological Applications*, combines some of the best-available forms of migration data for 12 species of migratory birds that represented different families, migratory strategies, breeding ranges, and available dataset sizes. This new method is a powerful advancement for migratory bird conservation at a time when many species are dramatically declining.

“Migratory birds complete some of the most impressive journeys on earth, and this new method of mapping their migrations gives us a clearer picture of the places these birds travel,” said Dr. Tim Meehan, quantitative ecologist for the National Audubon Society and primary author of the study.

The migration data used in this study can be categorized broadly into three types: occurrence and abundance models, represented by eBird Status products from the Cornell Lab of Ornithology; band re-encounter data, provided by the USGS Bird Banding Laboratory; and tracking datasets provided by researchers from across the globe and made available on Movebank. The researchers integrated these types of migratory data for 12 focal species, leveraging the strengths of each, to create a comprehensive – and accurate – map of migratory bird movements. The models give researchers a unique picture of avian migration, especially for species with over-water migrations or migrations that take place across isolated geographies.

“Birds tell us about the health of our environment, and better mapping of their migration pathways shows us where we should focus conservation efforts,” said Dr. Jill Deppe, senior director of Audubon’s Migratory Bird Initiative and a co-author of the study. “These new maps will help communities all across the hemisphere protect migratory birds and the places they need.”

For many species of migratory birds, the complete annual cycle remains relatively unknown or poorly understood. The three data types describe the annual cycle in different ways; banding data and tracking provide detailed information on how individual birds move across the hemisphere often enabling connections between breeding and wintering populations, but they provide limited information about the movement of the entire population. The eBird Status products use information collected by community scientists to provide information about the distribution of the entire population throughout the year. By combining these two types of data, the researchers were able to generate maps that describes the pathways by which migratory birds move across the hemisphere. Migratory birds are also facing steep declines, with an estimated 2.5 billion individuals lost between 1970 and 2019. This unique information about migratory pathways will allow conservationists across the hemisphere to more effectively protect and restore the habitats that these birds depend on throughout their full annual cycle. More types of migration data can allow for even further development of this integration, filling in knowledge gaps for species across the hemisphere.

“The more data we have and the better the tracking technology becomes, the clearer these migration pathways can get,” said Dr. Sarah Saunders, quantitative ecologist and co-author of the study. “It’s exciting to be able to work with researchers from across the globe to put these pieces together and give us the best chance at protecting migratory birds.”

The National Audubon Society protects birds and the places they need, today and tomorrow, throughout the Americas using science, advocacy, education and on-the-ground conservation. Audubon is a nonprofit conservation organization. Learn more how to help at www.audubon.org and follow us on Twitter and Instagram at @audubonsociety.



photo Mike Truchon Shutterstock

House Wren, controversial character adapted from *American Bird Conservancy*

As implied by its common name, the small, active House Wren is often found near people's homes. This bird's genus name *Troglodytes* means "hole dweller," and refers to its mouse-like tendency to pop in and out of crevices while foraging and seeking shelter or nesting spots.

Smaller and plainer than the related Carolina Wren, the House Wren is grayish-brown, with subtle barring on its wings, back, and tail, and a light (not white) eyeline. Both sexes look alike. Like other wrens, the House Wren often carries its tail cocked up at a jaunty angle.

Although many birds fiercely defend their territories during the breeding season, the House Wren takes this behavior to an extreme. The small songbird invades the cavity nests of neighboring species including the Eastern Bluebird, Prothonotary Warbler, Tree Swallow, and even other House Wrens to pierce (pip) eggs, throw young birds out of their nests, or sometimes fiercely peck nestlings and even adults to death. Males will also stuff cavities with twigs to keep other birds from nesting there.

Territorial House Wrens even attack the open-cup nests of species such as the Gray Catbird and American Robin. Larger birds readily chase House Wrens, which suggests that they recognize the threat the smaller birds pose.

Although the House Wren's aggressive behavior may shock human bystanders, it allows this small bird to gain an edge in the often-fierce competition for nesting space.

The loud, bubbly song of the House Wren seems larger than the singer itself! The Chippewa call it *O-du-na'-mis-sug-ud-da-we'-shi*, meaning "big noise for its size." Males constantly vocalize

while on territory; females also sing, but not as consistently. This wren also has a characteristic harsh, scolding call.

Male House Wrens arrive on the breeding grounds first, establishing their territories by singing and building a number of "dummy" stick nests to attract a female. When a female decides to accept a male and his territory (female House Wrens do the choosing), her mate takes her on a tour of his pseudo-nests. When she accepts a nest, she finishes it by adding a soft lining of feathers, hair, moss, and rootlets.

Although usually monogamous, House Wren relationships can get complicated. A male may attract several females to nest in his territory, but may also sneak into other males' territories to mate with the females nesting there. Chicks in a clutch rarely all have the same genetic father.

In turn, a female House Wren may raise a second brood with a new mate, leaving the young from her first clutch for the male to raise. House Wrens typically raise two broods per season — quite often with different mates.

The House Wren is famous for nesting just about anywhere: in natural and artificial cavities, nest boxes of all types, planters and pots, drainpipes, shoes, and laundry left out to dry. John James Audubon, famous for his paintings of birds in their natural settings, painted a family of House Wrens nesting in an old hat!

The female lays a clutch of four to eight whitish-pink, brown-speckled eggs, which she incubates for about two weeks. Interestingly, House Wren eggs have unusually thick shells, and are almost twice as strong as similar-sized eggs. This unusual shell strength is likely an adaptation to this species' egg-destroying tendencies, which extend to their own kind.

Unlike the more omnivorous Carolina Wren, the House Wren sticks with an all-insect diet, which is why birds of most U.S. and Canadian nesting populations must migrate south when winter arrives. This wren forages in thick vegetation and on the ground for all sorts of insects, including grasshoppers, crickets, ants, caterpillars, and moths, and other invertebrates such as spiders and snails.

The House Wren is one of the most widely distributed native songbirds in the Americas, breeding from Canada to the southern tip of South America. A whopping 31 subspecies are recognized, further divided into five groups.

Many migrating House Wrens are killed in collisions with buildings, communications towers, and cars. As insectivores, they are also vulnerable to the direct and cumulative effects of pesticides.

GHAS Mission

The mission of the Grays Harbor Audubon Society is to seek a sustainable balance between human activity and the needs of the environment, and to promote enjoyment of birds and the natural world



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If you would like to join Grays Harbor Audubon Society (GHAS), please fill out the form below, ***make check payable to Grays Harbor Audubon Society*** and return it with your check to:

**Grays Harbor Audubon Society
P.O. Box 470
Montesano, WA 98563**

Chapter Memberships include a subscription to *The Sandpiper* newsletter. All Chapter Memberships above the Sandpiper category provide financial support to our Chapter. The Grays Harbor Audubon Society is totally self-supporting.

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News & Editorial

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or email to
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Copy deadline 10th of
month preceding
membership meeting

Program Meeting

***We are looking forward to our
Annual Potluck Picnic which will be held
virtually via Zoom. See Membership article
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82118695964?pwd=dDVqOXFlbUJrakxLWXhLNTRQL1ovUT09>***

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The Sandpiper

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